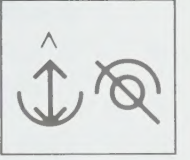


COMMUNICATING TOGETHER



A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ABOUT AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION

VOLUME 8, NUMBER 4

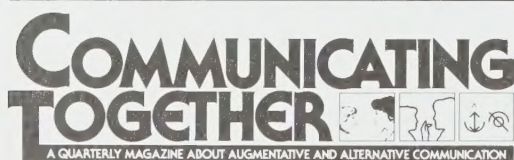
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FROM BLISSYMBOLS TO POETRY

GITTA LONNQVIST

Leo Leppälä was the first winner of the Shirley McNaughton Exemplary Communication Award at the Fourth Biennial International ISAAC Conference in Sweden last August. Those present twice had the thrill of hearing his poems, written originally in Blissymbols then translated into Swedish. The first time was at the ISAAC talent night, the second was at the awards ceremony, when his attendant sang Leo's words to a beautiful old Nordic song. It was a moving experience for us all and proved that Leo was a remarkable young man and a most worthy recipient of the award.

Gitta Lonnqvist has known Leo for many years through her work with him at Samfundet Folkhälsan Centre in Helsingfors, Finland. She is an affiliate and presenter with the Finnish Bliss Association. Gitta sent us this article about Leo and his communication success with Blissymbols.

Leo Leppälä was born 1963 in Finland, to Finnish speaking parents. The family moved to Sweden when he was an infant and lived there until Leo was 12 years old. Because of his very severe condition, he did not live with his parents but was raised in institutions, and at the age of seven started school at Folke Bernadotte-Lemmet in Uppsala, Sweden.

In 1975, the family moved back to Jakobstad in Finland. Though his family's language was still Finnish, Leo's language by this time was Swedish. I first met him when he was admitted to Folkhälsan which cares for the Swedish speaking handicapped children in Finland.

Despite his very severe disability, he seemed to be a happy and positive young person, interested in everything around him, and eager to learn everything he could. I remember thinking that he had been well taken care of in Sweden at Folke Bernadotte-Lemmet. He missed his friends in Sweden very much but was still able to make new friends in Finland. He was very eager to communicate using facial expressions and sounds, but often we had difficulty even

understanding his yes/no.

Despite much training in Sweden, he could only read a few words and sentences. At that time there was no special school for Swedish speaking cerebral palsied children in Finland, and it was decided that Leo should live in a children's home in the same city where his family lived, and should visit Folkhälsan's Rehabilitation Centre twice a year for month long visits. The only school we could offer him in those early days was one for mentally retarded children. I think many people thought it was the right place for him since no one had been able to assess him properly. When he was asked recently how he felt about that school, he told us — with no bitterness at all — that he was never happy there.

A First Try at Blissymbols

During his periods at Folkhälsan in 1975 and 1976 I still tried to teach him how to speak, with little success at all. In 1976, I met his old teachers in Sweden to discuss his problems, and we all agreed that talking, reading, and writing were probably impossible for Leo. It was there that I first heard about Blissymbols. They were just about to start using them in Sweden. I even got a copy of a sheet with four hundred symbols with English words,

hard to read because the symbols were in a very small size.

However, it was not until September, 1977 that I showed the Blissymbols to Leo, who thought they were interesting! I gave him a paper with six big symbols on it: I, will, eat, drink, out, toilet. Using a pencil as a pointer, Leo immediately told me his first sentence — answering what he would do if he were hungry: "I will eat."

He urged me to write to Shirley McNaughton for more information, and in February, 1978, we got a nice letter from her and the old booklet *Teaching Guidelines*.

We copied the 100 symbol charts from the Guidelines, translated the words into Swedish and covered each symbol until it was time to teach it. For each speech therapy session I planned to teach him five symbols, but he was so eager to learn them he always wanted "one more" to go. Pointing was hard for him. Our occupational therapist (Christine Eklundh) made him a pin to point with and tied it to his hand. By the end of the month, his pointing had improved greatly, mainly because he was so highly motivated to communicate.

He went home telling me that he would be back for a month in the autumn and wanted a 200 symbol chart then. And so it happened. At that time he got the "combine



Leo uses his light pointer to communicate.

symbol" and grasped the idea right away. He spent all day combining symbols making everybody on the ward guess the answers. It was great fun and he was so clever and creative. I asked him if we shouldn't tell others about his success with Blissymbols and he answered "important".

A Natural Ambassador

We invited the speech therapists from our neighbour, the Finnish hospital Lasten Linna, and they came to see Leo at work. Speech pathologist Marjatta Jarowa was with them and that is when our "co-work" started.

We happened to have an "open house" at the ward this same week and Leo gladly showed his new way of communicating to every guest. Luckily, "the big boss" at Folkhälsan was so impressed that when Marjatta and I started to plan the first Blissymbol course for instructors in August, 1979, we had no problem getting the support for it!

When Leo went back home to the north of Finland, I went along to teach the care-givers and his teacher. Leo's teacher, Barbro Spiken did fantastic work with Leo, and very soon he was telling long stories using his symbols. Around Christmas, 1978, she helped him get a long Christmas story published in the newspaper in Jakobstad. Barbro Spiken is still his good friend and was one of his assistants in Stockholm at the recent ISAAC conference.



Leo and Shirley McNaughton share the excitement of the award.

Barbro also arranged for him to be integrated in a regular school for some hours each week. In 1980, Leo started to use the standard 500 symbol chart but could no longer use hand-pointing to target such small areas. He eye-pointed to an area and the "partner" then did the scanning by hand. He had to wait nearly three years before he got a good light pointer. He still uses both methods when communicating with his Blissymbol board.

When the Finnish Bliss Association was founded in 1980, Leo became a member and he is always the top seller of our Christmas cards. He has gone through the Blissymbol course and he is always ready to demonstrate the system to guests, students, or the press; that has been very important in getting money for the Bliss work and equipment.

After finishing elementary school he went to a Finnish high school for handicapped persons for one year, and then moved to a service house in Vasa, a big Finnish institution. Then he moved home to his family, the first time he had ever lived with his parents, sisters, and little brother. The family has always been dear to him, although he has not had much contact with them, and they speak Finnish which still is a bit hard for him to understand. In 1985, Folkhälsan built a small (eight person) 'service-home' for Swedish-speaking handicapped people and Leo has lived there since it opened. Twice I have had Bliss workshops for the personnel and the other residents and they all communicate quite well with Leo, who seems happy there.

The first children's home in Finland he lived in was run by the Church and Leo has always had a close relationship with God. Now, the Folkhälsan Service is next door to a church and Leo is an active member in that community.

The Emergent Poet

In 1987, I got my first Apple IIE computer and the Swedish Bliss scanning software. Leo came for a week to try it (September, 1987) and it took him one hour to learn to master it! He was happy that the Blisscom board was using the Nordic standard display arrangement, the same as he had used for so many years, because he could find

the symbols right away. Finally, in the beginning of 1989, he got his own computer with a speech synthesizer. What a lucky day! Leo now started writing poems. The first thing he wrote was his version of an old song.

Vem Kan Segla Förutan Vind

vem kan tala förutan mun
vem kan gora brev utan händer
vem kan skiljas fran vännen sin
utan att käna smärta
jag kan tala förutan mun
jag kan göra brev utan händer
men ej skiljas från vänneum
utan att känna smärta

Who Can Sail Without Wind

who can talk without his mouth
who can write without his hands
who can part from a friend
without feeling pain
I can talk without my mouth
I can write letters without my hands
but I cannot part from a friend
without feeling pain

After that poem was published, he was contacted by the Finnish poets' organization "Tondiktarna" (putting music to poems) and offered membership. Many famous Swedish-speaking poets belong to the organization. Members work with him and put Swedish words to Leo's symbols. Then they work through the text together so Leo can indicate if it is the way he means it to be. This winter the organization will publish a book with Leo's poems.

In the future, Leo wants to help other Bliss children and their families. I really feel that the Blissymbols have given him the opportunity to live a full life and the means to keep occupied.

Leo never had any difficulties in learning the symbols. You just showed them to him and that was it. I have always felt he thinks in the same way as Charles Bliss did, and looks at the world in the same way.

Right now, I feel that his most urgent need is an easy application device for 'everyday' communication when he is without the computer. From the beginning he has played a big role in the development of Blissymbol communication in Finland. He is the perfect advocate, and so convincing! □

A Summer to Remember

KARI HARRINGTON



Kari Harrington was in the original Blissymbol class of 1971 at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre. She attended elementary school at James Robinson Public School in Markham and then Langstaff Secondary School in Richmond Hill. Aside from writing this column, she works part-time for ESCI, making presentations to schools and other organizations promoting public awareness of alternative and augmentative communication and the special needs of those without functional speech. Kari has written many poems and stories and is currently completing her first novel, *Don't Shut Me Out*.

Last summer was a particularly interesting one for me. I spent four pleasant weeks at Participation House, Markham, to give my Mom and Dad a break, and then I had a couple of weeks at our cottage. The weather was great for us there, and I went swimming almost every day. I wear a life jacket to keep me afloat and that lets me swim on my back all on my own. There is a small island off shore from my cottage and I set that as my goal. Each day, I swam to the island and back. It sure made me feel good — free to

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control my own body and proud that I could reach my goal each time.

A Family Wedding

The most exciting thing though, was that my sister Linda got married. Before the big day, there were showers, parties and things to do that I could help with. There was also a lot of company. The actual wedding was beautiful, of course. (They always are.) I was honoured to be the one who held Linda's flowers throughout the ceremony. The reception afterwards was great fun. Linda's best friend made sure I was in on all the shenanigans. I didn't get "dropped" into bed until after 2 a.m. No one is quite sure what time it was!

The days after the wedding would have been pretty dull, but I had a lot of interesting letters arrive around then, and one of them I am going to tell you about now. It was from Tomor Zavalani who lives in

his Blissymbolics, Tomor designed his system to help bridge the barriers built up by all the different languages that exist. He wanted to make it possible for people to communicate everything they might need for daily life anywhere in the world — no matter what other language was usually spoken there. Tomor has written a book, which, I understand, shows his symbols and explains his system. I have just written to him asking him to send me one. I am always curious about other symbols.

For your interest, the symbols in Figure 1 are some of the symbols from a poem Tomor sent me. I particularly like his symbols for Peace on Earth. I think you'll be able to guess most of the others by yourself. See if you can. The answers are shown on page 8. □

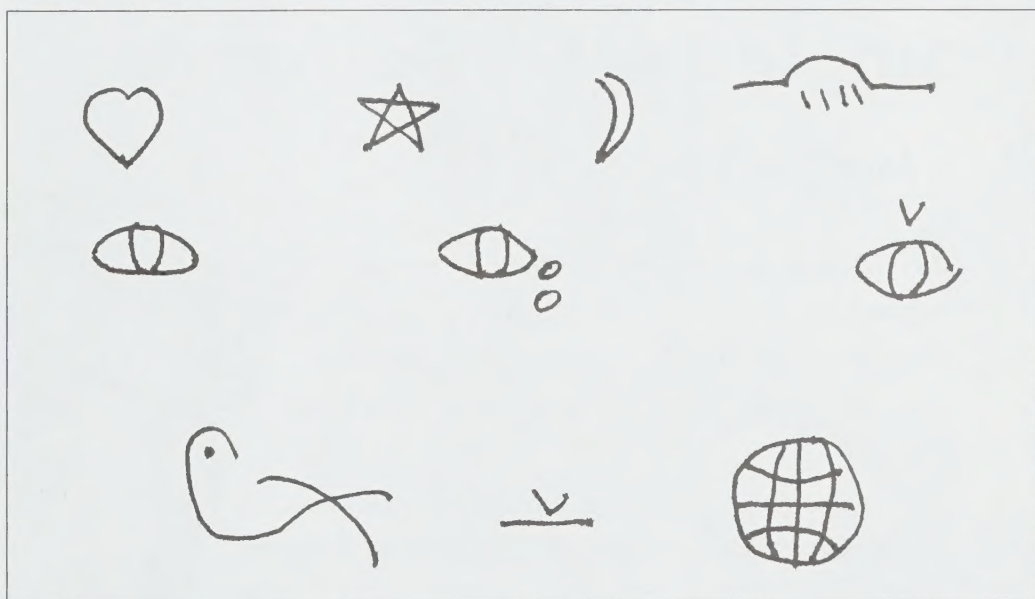


Figure 1. Jet Era Glyphs

Panorama City, California.

Tomor grew up in Albania which is in Europe. By the time he finished school he could speak three languages. After a while he came to Toronto, Canada and learned to speak English as well. For thirty years now, he has been living in California. During this time, he has developed a universal pictographic system called "Jet Era Glyphs". Somewhat like Charles Bliss with

Editor's Note:

If you are interested in his symbols too, write him for more information. His address is: Mr. Tomor S. Zavalani, 14664 Roscoe Blvd., #33, Panorama City, California, U.S.A. 91402

A Letter from Newfoundland

ELAINE DROVER

Elaine Drover is a young woman from St. John's, Newfoundland who has used Blissymbols for many years. She was featured in the December 1986 issue of Communicating Together, Vol. 4, No. 4, when she spent the summer in Sudbury, Ontario, demonstrating the Blissapple computer program at Science North.

She recently wrote to bring us up to date on what she is doing.

Volunteering

My friend, Laurie, from Citizens Advocacy told me that Macdonald Drive Elementary School needed a volunteer to clean up. I went up there and they took me on. Laurie used to come along with me but now I go there by myself.

I go there once a week. I tidy the teachers' resource room and stamp the kids' school work, pass out their math papers, and, of course, communicate with the kids. They



Elaine Drover at her computer.

seem to like me coming.

By the way, I have athetoid cerebral palsy and use Blissymbols to talk. One afternoon I watched "Mr.

Symbol Man" with ninety Grade 5 kids! This helped them learn more about Blissymbols and the way I communicate. □

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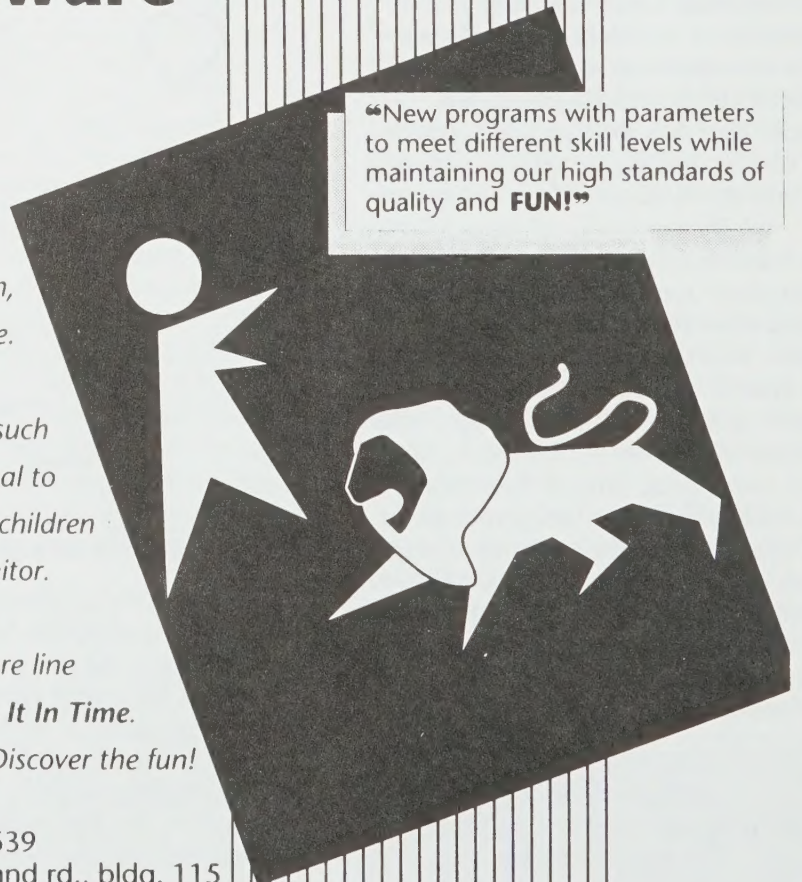
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A Mother's Story

ZIVA SHVADRON

Ziva Shvadron and her son Yehonatan were among the many in the Israeli delegation to the ISAAC conference in Stockholm in August, 1990. Anyone who met Yehonatan there was captivated by his winning smile and sense of humour. He participated fully in both the conference sessions and the many social events. Ziva gave the following paper at one session and has allowed us to publish it.

My son Yehonatan is a seven year-old child with cerebral palsy. He was born prematurely and after five months in the hospital came home with severe motor problems. Even when he was a little baby, I started talking to him a lot. I believe this was the first step in creating true communication.

Four years ago, Yehonatan started going to the Preschool Treatment Centre of Bikur Holim Hospital in Jerusalem. At that time, when he was just three years old, he had good comprehension, but no way of communicating. I could understand him and his needs, but only for very basic things.

After a year of examination and assessment by the staff of the Centre and getting used to the new place, Yehonatan started learning an alternative form of communication. His speech therapist told me we would start with pictures for daily activities. Two days later I took her a chart with photographs of some of his things: his bed for sleeping, his bath-tub for washing, his stroller for going out, his toys for playing, etc. I wanted to help. I didn't really understand where it would take us, but I felt it would be for Yehonatan's benefit.

It did not occur to me that Yehonatan would soon have to say what he needed and wanted and that one-way communication would not be enough. I still regarded him as a baby, mainly because of his physical condition. He could not (and still can't) sit, walk or eat by himself.

Soon he had the words "yes" and "no" on his chart and started hav-

ing Blissymbols instead of pictures. I was constantly in touch with his speech therapists and the special staff in the kindergarten. We were all aware that I wanted to help Yehonatan but something unknown, was missing. His Blissymbol chart was expanded but he used it mostly in his class; never at home.

Frustration for Us Both

Then, when he was five years old, we went through a very hard time. I could not understand him any more. I would shout and he would cry. I tried to give him the Blissymbol display, but he did not want it. Very often we both went to sleep in tears.

Yehonatan was fully dependent on me. He could not be with anyone else as I understood best

what he wanted or needed. And then one day, a parent from the kindergarten asked the speech therapist to arrange a meeting with other parents whose children used Blissymbols for communication. I was invited, together with two other parents, the social workers and the speech therapists.

A sceptical parent asked why his three-year-old child shouldn't immediately start learning the alphabet instead of Blissymbols. He also talked about the inconvenience of carrying the note book all the time (his child had no motor problems).

I do not know how it began, but as the parent became more aggressive and provocative, I realized that there was no other choice. I defended Blissymbols and alternative com-



Yehonatan and his mother at the ISAAC meeting in Stockholm.

munication and the needs of our children. Later at night, I finally realized, emotionally, that AAC was Yehonatan's only chance to communicate.

Two days later, he asked me for the first time, to give him his symbol display. Ever since, as soon as he returns home from school, I give him his display immediately.

I think that speech therapists should encourage the formation of small parents' support groups so that they can help each other understand the meaning and importance of AAC and share their experiences.

At first, Yehonatan answered my questions with single words. I taught him, and we still practise today, to create full sentences. One day we were sitting at home, and suddenly Yehonatan said "rain". It had started raining outside. I felt so happy. He made a real step towards full communication. He had said what he thought, or heard, and did not just answer a question. This was the first time he had initiated communication.

Yehonatan started showing his feelings: "I love you, Mummy," and "I am afraid, please hold my hand" or "you are nice" and "I do not like it". He started playing with other children and did not need me around all the time. He felt that whenever he needed me, he could just say so on his symbol board. Children and adults were fascinated by his sense of humour and his way of saying things. Finally, he was becoming a part of society.

Along with creating full sentences, he started using words similar to words he did not have on his chart in order to express himself. For example, we have two friends named "Brown" and "Rosi". Yehonatan uses the colours brown and pink to say their names. Another time he told me "Fill Gate". I did not understand as it made no sense. He realized he should give me a hint and added the word "car". Then I understood: "Fill gate car" for "to fill the car with gas". He did not have the word gas and used gate instead. In Hebrew it is the word "Delet" instead of "Delek". It became our joke and Yehonatan still does not have the word delek.

New Opportunities with a VOCA

Last year, Yehonatan started using a Voice Output Communication Aid (VOCA). I was a little sceptical at the beginning, but soon found it wonderfully suitable for him. He learned how to use it so well that again our life has changed. I do not know how many people can appreciate ten minutes of lying down with closed eyes. I do! Now I can afford to rest and still be in contact with Yehonatan. I do not have to be next to him in order to communicate. I can be in another room and hear "Mummy, I want to eat." (He says it 1,000 times a day.)

There is one thing I would like to add which I think is very important. Over the four years, the development of Yehonatan's communication would not have been possible without the special treatment he was given by occupational therapists and physiotherapists. They made sure he had the most suitable chairs to make him stable so he would be able to use his body in the best manner possible.

When I see him smile, I think of all the special people whose care and dedication to people like Yehonatan bring light to all who are not able to communicate without their help.

Please, never give up!□

Answers to Jet Era Glyphs (from page 5)

Row 1: love, star, moon, rain

Row 2: eye, tears, to see

Row 3: peace on earth

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Wild Bears and Teddy Bears

KARI KROGH

Nonspeech communication became an important part of Kari Krogh's life when a family member lost his ability to speak. She has incorporated this interest into her work as a director and initiator of an integration program and summer camp for children using sign language to communicate, and as a therapeutic play worker with physically disabled youngsters, many of whom use augmentative communication systems. As a research assistant and student at The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, she will be conducting her thesis on literacy development in augmentative communicators.

Bears! Bears? Where? Are they black bears, grizzly bears, wild bears or teddy bears? *Wild Bears and Teddy Bears* is a package of strategies and activities to assist educators in promoting the development of pre-literacy and literacy related skills in children who are nonspeaking and physically disabled. I chose bears because it is a very motivating topic for me, given my fascination with and fear of these wild animals. I am hoping that the prototype package will also be motivating for the students and educators who use it.

The package is comprised of three sections including an educator's guide, and a collection of strategies and practical activities. The third part includes resources such as colour photographs and black and white sketches of animals, a list of books about bears and poems and songs about bears and other animals. The prototype is on display in the Resource Room of the Easter Seal Communication Institute.

Part One: Educator's Guide

The objective of the package is to provide assistance to educators in their attempts to design an individualized curriculum for literacy skill development in nonspeaking and

physically disabled students from preschool through to the early grades. It is not designed with one graphic system in mind. Rather, the educator can incorporate the system chosen to be most appropriate for the individual student. Supportive materials are provided so that the educator, who is intimately aware of the unique learning style, needs, and abilities of the student, can design effective academic activities and provide valuable learning experiences.

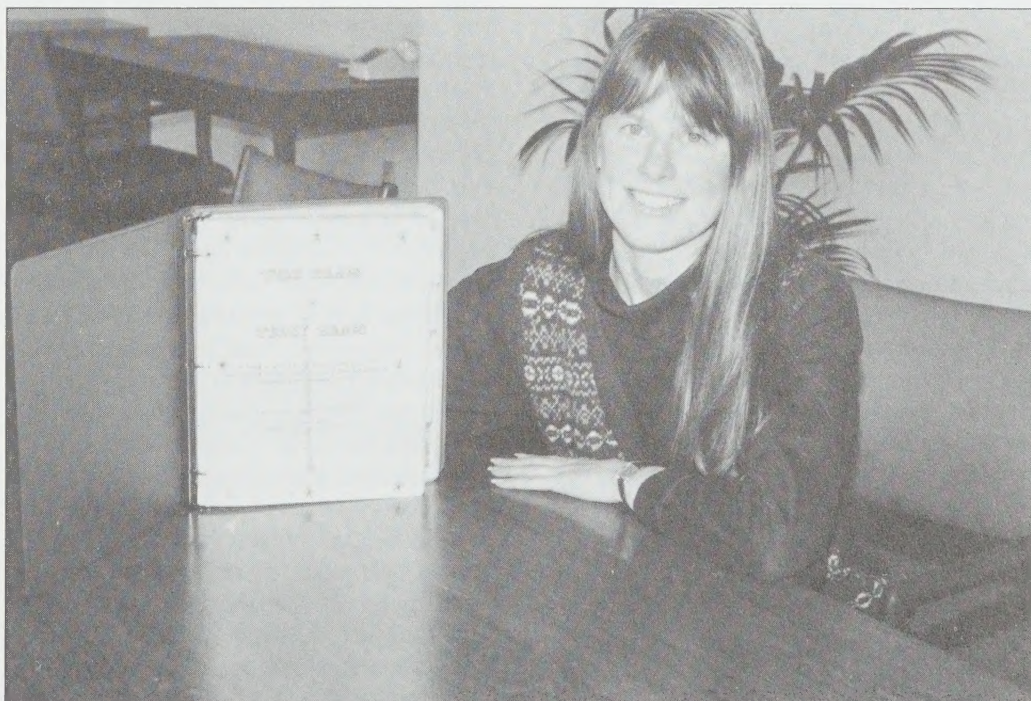
Part Two: Theme Unit of Activities and Strategies

This section suggests some interesting activities that educators can provide to their students to increase the opportunities to explore concepts and engage in problem-solving. Children are read books and poems, they view and read accessible books at home and in the classroom, they visit libraries and book stores, they examine three dimensional forms and textures, and they increase their world knowledge by participating in field trips. Educators involve the students in these activities by asking questions and providing opportunities to initiate comments and inquiries.

Increasing content (world) knowledge and developing specific skills related to pre-literacy and literacy are emphasized in the educator's curriculum. A multi-modal approach provides opportunities for reinforcement and repetition while maintaining the interest of the student. Four important characteristics of the curriculum should be considered by the educator:

1. Access and Facilitation of Communication:

It is crucial that students have access at all times to an augmentative communication system which allows them to initiate and respond and which includes adequate vocabulary. Students must also be given the opportunity by others around them to use their systems for functional communication. When we think of young speaking children we know that they sometimes ask many questions which allow them to develop an understanding of the pragmatic skills involved in two-way conversational exchange, as well as knowledge about things in their environment. For the augmentative communicator, access to communication systems will help the development of interactive communication (pragmatic)



Kari Krogh with her program *Wild Bears and Teddy Bears*.

skills, expressive communication/ language skills and receptive oral language skills. The educator can facilitate this process by encouraging, recognizing and rewarding communicative attempts. Parents and teachers should provide ample opportunity for children to use their augmentative communication systems. In some circumstances it may not always be practical to have a full system available. However, partial systems or displays can be created for these times. For example, a bear theme board can be used during conversation about bears, particular games, and comprehension assessments. Symbols or words which have been introduced during the theme unit can be added to the permanent display if requested by the student or the teacher.

2. Developing Thinking Skills

This is very related to the availability of effective augmentative or alternative communication systems. The educator can stimulate thinking skills by asking lots of questions and demanding a variety of answers including simple yes/no responses, guesses, predictions, opinions, or statements. It is important that the educators challenge children without frustrating them. When formulating a question, the educator should consider both the cognitive and linguistic complexity used. A brief presentation of a hierarchy of thinking skills (Gagne, 1988) is given below with some animal theme examples.

- Problem-solving
e.g., bears crawl into their caves during snowstorms so that no other animal can follow their tracks.
- Rule-learning
e.g., all bears are mammals
- Concept-learning
e.g., all grizzly bears share certain characteristics such as a hump over their shoulders.
- classification
e.g., a bear is an animal. An animal is something that is alive, breaths, eats, sometimes makes noises and moves.
- Identification
e.g., it is a bear
- Discrimination
e.g., it is brown

3. Making Books Accessible for Independent Reading

Silent sustained reading has been found to be a successful activity for improving reading achievement in non-disabled students. It provides students with the time to look at print, match meaning to print and extract meaning from text. Educators can make reading an independent activity for the child who is severely physically disabled by using the following:

i) *Tabbed Books*: Attach large visually obvious sturdy tabs to the pages of a book. Place the longer tabs at the front of the books so that they will be caught first by a simple hand motion. Tabs that are placed sequentially from bottom (end closest to the child) to top of the book may be most effective.

ii) *Taped Books*: Read a book into a tape which can be listened to by the child. Make sure that you speak slowly enough for the student to be able to assimilate the written word if he or she will be reading while listening. Be sure to leave enough time for the student to change the page. Make the most of the meaning you can convey through this mode of language by using intonation, pausing, and changes in volume. You may find that it is more effective to allow the student to listen to the tape first and then read the book rather than attempting them simultaneously.

iii) *Slide-Tape Books*: Make a tape of a book and also take slides of each page. You can turn the tape on and the student can have the slide changer attached to his or her desk so that when the time comes, he or she can, in effect, turn the page through a single switch. When making the tape, you may want to read the words on a page, leave a pause so that the student can look at illustrations and then ring a bell to indicate that it is time to turn the page. Repeated readings using slide tape books have been found to improve reading comprehension (Koppenhaver & Yoder, 1989).

iv) *Software Packages*: There are several software packages available which allow students to receive auditory feedback of their own writing or of the stories entered by the teacher. Shirley McNaughton has been developing a program called StoryBliss which allows the educator or student to program

passages in Blissymbolics and/or print. Auditory feedback at various levels (e.g., word, sentence) can be given upon request. This can be useful for teachers when they are attempting to fade out symbols and phase in print. Auditory feedback may also be useful in developing letter-sound relationships.

Accessible books increase the overall opportunities for exposure to print which has been found to be comparatively low in nonspeaking severely physically disabled pre-schoolers (Light, 1989). The combination of auditory and visual language stimulation may be an effective means for these students to develop skills related to language and literacy. Augmentative communicators have been found to have very good receptive language skills (Berninger & Gans, 1986) compared to their other language skills (reading and writing). By receiving visual and auditory language simultaneously or sequentially, students may be able to compensate for a weakness in reading by using their strengths in deriving meaning from oral language.

4. Increasing World Knowledge

This is a very important consideration when programming and providing educational opportunities for students, particularly if their physical disability has acted to limit life experiences in the past. Children need something on which to base their writing, problem-solving, opinions and ideas. Children typically derive meaning from context when they are reading. However, when the knowledge of the context or topic is lacking, this may become problematic. When you are working on a bear or animal theme you can do the following to increase the child's background knowledge:

- visit a zoo, pet shop
- have a house pet or pet from another class visit your classroom
- look for books about bears at the library or book stores
- order magazines which discuss and illustrate animals and their habitats.

Remember to ask lots of questions with the hierarchy in mind! What colour is it? What is it? What differences exist between the grizzly bear and the polar bear? How does it move? How does it communicate?

While you are out on a field trip

take pictures with a camera. It may be helpful to show the picture in the presence of the real animal. Afterwards you can ask the students to recall their experiences and to express their thoughts, ideas, opinions about the animals in the pictures. By writing this down you can demonstrate a purpose of written language (e.g. a letter to a friend communicating an experience). Many activities which aim to develop prerequisite language skills can utilize these pictures, such as sequencing the events which occurred during the trip, matching, categorizing and comparing animals. Animal cards can be used for games such as "concentration" and "fish". Depending on the level of educational achievement, it may be appropriate to ask the student to match the photo with a recording of animal sounds (found in the local public library), a three dimensional form (model) or the word and/or symbol which represents this animal. This would help the child to make the association between auditory and visual stimuli and between the concrete and printed representation.

I hope that this review of some of the contents of *Wild Bears and Teddy Bears* will spark the imagination of parents and teachers and help them in their attempts to pro-

vide enjoyable educational opportunities and experiences for their children who are nonspeaking and physically disabled. Best of luck with your literacy programming! □

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Blissymbolics Communication International Distributors

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CLAUDIA WOOD

SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT NEWS

New Symbols

In the last issue readers were shown examples of the new symbols recently added to the system. Most related to the topic of Human Sexuality and are available in *New Blissymbols 1980 - 1990*, a 62 page document which contains all the symbols which have been added to the system since the publication of *Blissymbols for Use*, Hehner (1980).

To obtain your copy of *New Blissymbols* send a cheque or money order for \$10 to:
Symbol Office,
Blissymbolics
Communication
International,
 250 Ferrand Drive,
 Suite 200, Don Mills,
 Ontario M3C 3P2

SEX EDUCATION MATERIALS AVAILABLE THROUGH BCI - SPRING 1991

In cooperation with Toronto area sex educators and authors David Hingsburger and Susan Ludwig, BCI plans to distribute a series of sex education booklets in the spring of 1991. The booklets, to be published jointly by York Region Public Health Department and SIECCAN (Sexual Information and Education of Canada), incorporate many of the new Blissymbols (see above).

The Symbol Office and the International Panel, responsible for the ongoing development of the system, are gratified to know that these symbols will appear in a publication so soon after their approval. BCI and the authors believe that the educational materials will enable a wider audience to avail themselves of the teaching possibilities inherent in the symbols.

Teaching Materials Needed

The Symbol Office has long been aware that caregivers and AAC instructors are busy individuals, who welcome teaching suggestions and educational support materials. A front page article in a Toronto newspaper about sex education programs for developmentally delayed students (Fine, 1989), prompted me to inform the authors about the new symbols. They were intrigued and decided to write the materials thinking, they could use them in their work.

Hingsburger, who counsels developmentally delayed individuals in the area of sexuality, was frustrated because clients often needed to communicate information which was beyond their communication ability. Clients lacked the vocabulary to ask questions or express their sexual concerns. Often he assumed clients' rudimentary understanding of sexual concepts because of

what they said, but he found upon questioning them in depth that their responses were often rote (Hingsburger, 1987). He has already field tested some of the new booklets successfully.

Wider Appeal

Though the materials were specifically intended for the developmentally delayed population, authors believe they will have a much wider appeal. Because the text is clear and simply stated, teachers of non-disabled, learning disabled and illiterate adults might find the booklets appropriate. Certainly the Blissymbols can be used to teach anyone the basic concepts and relationships between them (see Blissymbol Talk, *Communicating Together* Vol. 8 No. 3). Pictures drawn by volunteer artist, James F. Whittingham, reinforce the text and symbol sentences.

References:

- Fine, S. Mentally retarded seeking sex education. (June 12, 1989). *The Globe and Mail*. Toronto.
- Hingsburger, D. (1987). Sex counseling with the developmentally handicapped: the assessment and management of seven critical problems. *Psychiatric Aspects of Mental Retardation Reviews*. 6(9), 41-46.

Description of Materials

Format:

- Series of 14 booklets, (approximately) 25 pages each (8 1/2 x 11 in. size which can be fastened into standard 3 ring binder),
- 7 (optional) audio-tapes for use in privacy (1 booklet per side),
- available on computer disks for the Macintosh to facilitate translation of text into other languages.
- limited amount of text on each page (reading level-approximately grade 7)
- important vocabulary highlighted
- information on each page translated into Blissymbolics

- glossary of Blissymbol sexuality vocabulary in each book
- simple illustrations on each page
- information stated in a clear, reassuring manner

Specific Booklet Topics

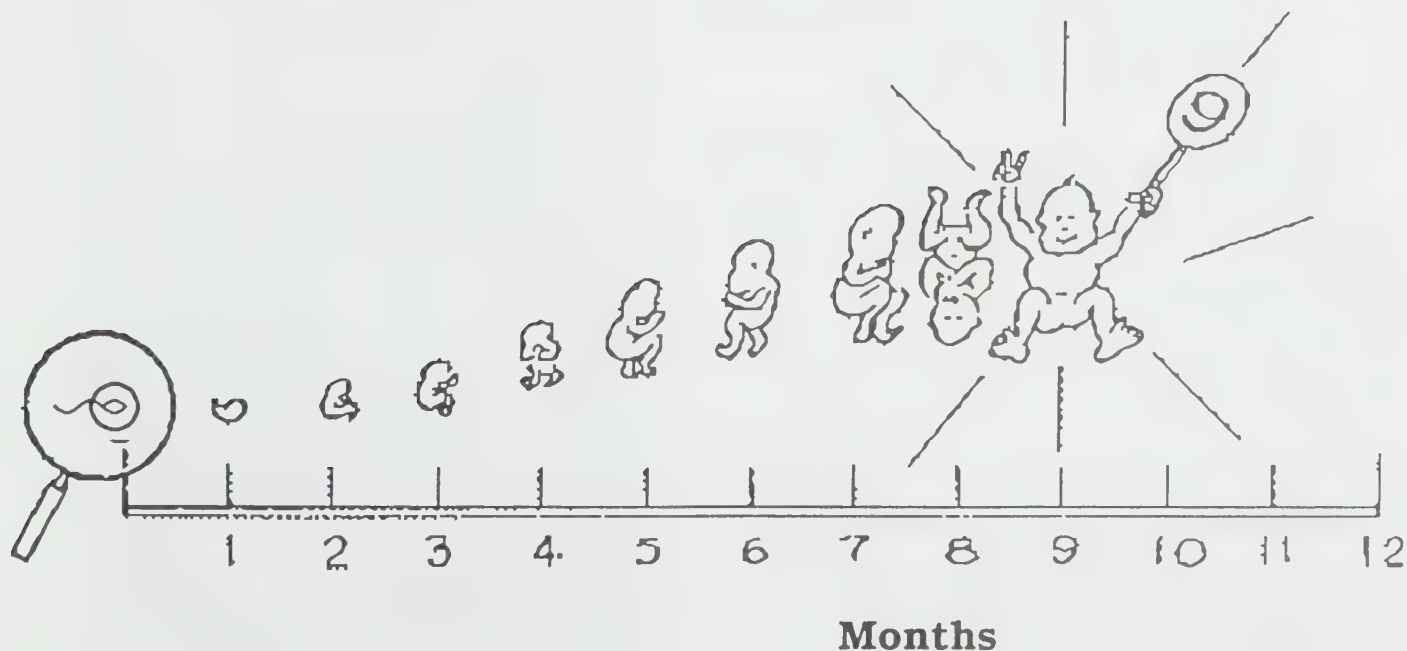
- Woman's Body
- Man's Body
- Human Reproduction
- Heterosexual Intercourse
- Loving Relationships
- Birth Control
- Homosexual Relationships
- Masturbation (Male)
- Masturbation (Female)
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- AIDS

- Sexual Abuse
- Sexuality and Physical Disability
- Sexual Self-Advocacy

Blissymbols used herein are derived from the symbols described in the work *Semantography*, original copyright © C. K. Bliss, 1949.

September 1982, C. K. Bliss granted an exclusive, non-cancellable and perpetual, world-wide license to Blissymbolics Communication International, to provide standards for the application of Blissymbols, for use by handicapped persons and persons having communication, language and learning difficulties.

Sample Page: Human Reproduction



Dealing with Death

Last year, John Dowling's sister died. It was his first experience with the death of someone close to him. This is what he wrote about it, in the June issue of *Communicating Together*.

This was the first time someone so close to me died. It was hard for me to deal with it. I am in a wheelchair. I could not hold onto others. Others did not hug me, so it was hard to show my feelings. They could not see that I missed my sister too.

I cannot speak very clearly, so I could not tell others how sad I was. I had a hard time expressing my feelings.

I have cerebral palsy. When I have strong emotions, I can't control my voice. At times, I cried out and at other times, I laughed out loud. So I did not go to the funeral. I stayed in my apartment alone.

Death is a hard time for everyone, but it is especially hard for someone who is nonspeaking. Now I know that I needed someone to talk to, to cry with, and to hold onto. I needed to feel a part of things. □

To Readers of Paraphrase

This story is from an article by John Dowling that appeared originally in *Communicating Together* Volume 8, Number 2, June, 1990.



John Dowling.

New from BCI !

Blissymbolics Communication International

is proud to announce the release of

AccessBliss 1.0

AccessBliss (© 1989 BCI) is a program for the Macintosh™ computer that enables the user to find and retrieve quickly and easily any currently approved Blissymbol. The Blissymbols are copied to the clipboard for subsequent use in wordprocessors such as MacWrite™, Microsoft Word™, or WordPerfect™; painting or drawing programs such as MacPaint™, MacDraw™, Ready Set Go™, SuperPaint™, or HyperCard™; in fact, virtually any Macintosh application program.

AccessBliss is easy to learn and easy to use. You will be copying and pasting symbols within minutes of starting AccessBliss, even if you have never used a computer before.

AccessBliss allows you to:

- find any Blissymbol in less than 5 seconds
- use your choice of 4 different symbol finding methods
- copy multiple symbols to your clipboard
- add the indicator(s) to a symbol with a single click of the mouse
- save the standard reference grid along with the symbol if you choose
- save the word along with its symbol if you choose
- format the clipboard in rows or columns
- access any symbol synonym directly
- save the Blissymbols in text or picture form

Example of Blissymbols from AccessBliss

∕ ^ ∖ ^ +! ⊕ ⊕ .
"This is a good tool to use."

Minimum Technical Requirements:

- Macintosh Plus, Macintosh SE or Macintosh II with 1 Megabyte or more of RAM
- AccessBliss is a HyperCard stack and requires HyperCard 1.2 or later version
- Hard disk with 10 Megabytes or more of memory is recommended but not necessary

AccessBliss package includes:

- AccessBliss program, developed by Russell Galvin, Geliefan Enterprises and Fraser Shein
- AccessBliss Users Guide, a complete step by step instruction manual for using AccessBliss
- BlissTemplate Font © 1989 BCI, developed by Peter Reich, University of Toronto
- BlissTemplate Font installation guide and instruction manual

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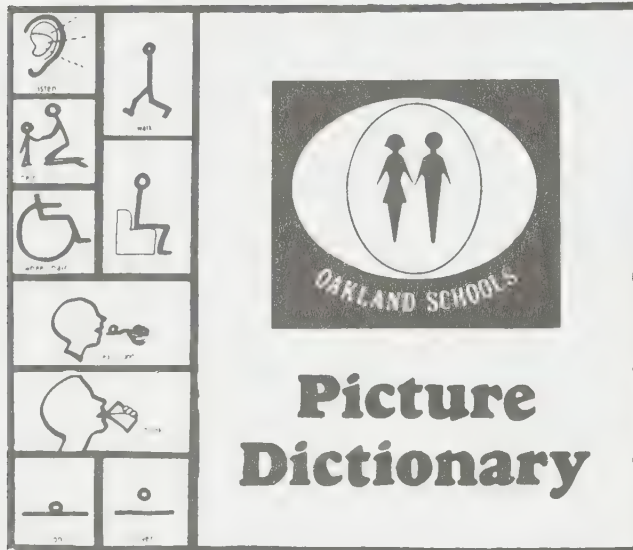
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- WRITE and SPEEC
- Worldsign
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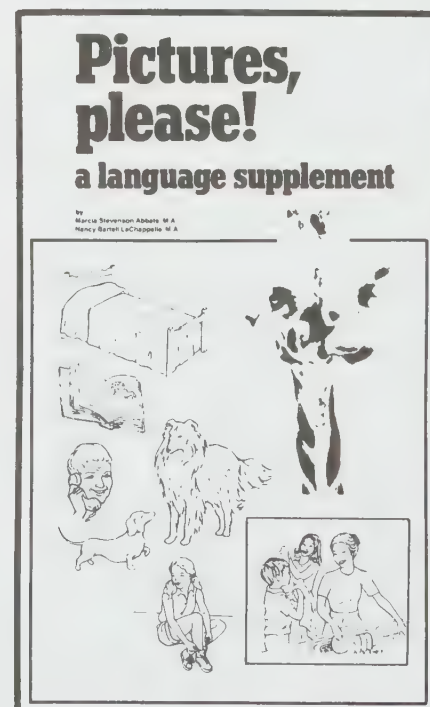
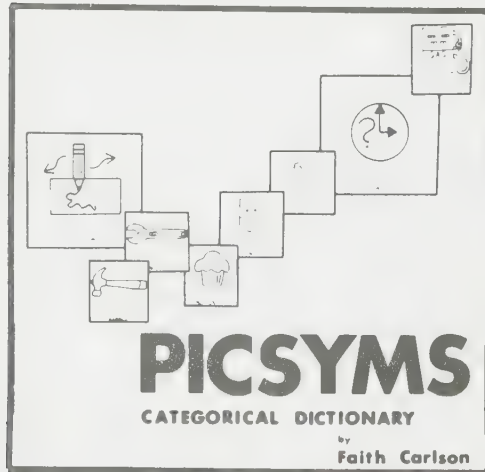
- Core Picture Vocabulary
- Oakland Schools Picture Dictionary
- Picture Communication Symbols
- Pictures Please!



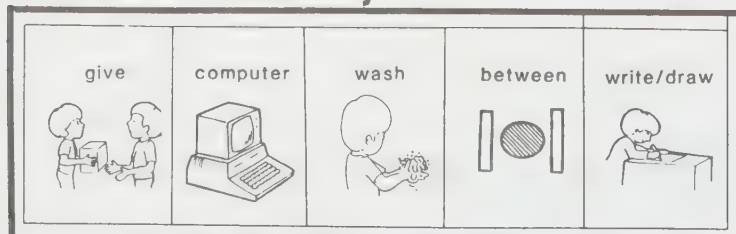
Blissymbolics

mouth 	(to) communicate 	funny 	song
mind 	(to) learn 	interesting 	school
feeling 	(to) smile 	special 	friend

Picture Communication Symbols



Core Picture Vocabulary



Communicating in Ontario



A NEWSLETTER FOR EDUCATORS ABOUT AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION

Dec. 1990

Literacy Aid for Physically Disabled Students

We are fast approaching the end of a year dedicated to literacy. Educators working with nonspeaking students are constantly challenged to find appropriate methods of teaching reading and writing skills. Older students present other unique challenges to make learning both satisfying and age appropriate. The Neil Squire Foundation has designed a software program, SARAW (Speech Assisted Reading and Writing) that addresses the needs of students who are physically unable use conventional materials to write or read. SARAW allows a user to access things on the screen without needing to read by *speaking* the choices that are available. The user can select the type of voice the computer will have as well as the rate of speed that the computer speaks. Using a Whole Language approach, the program is set up with three sections: Reading, Writing and Activities.

The Reading Portion of the program can read from a collection of stories appropriate for the older student. The users can also work with stories that they have composed themselves or read current news items.

Various options as to how the computer will read the story have been built into the program.

The Writing Portion of the program is a talking word processor. The computer can speak individual letters, words or whole sentences. The auditory feedback helps students to recognize whether their work sounds right.

The Activities section of the program has two word games and a Sounding Board to teach phonics.

The Ideas section gives suggested topics and provides some Pre-writing hints. Field trials on the software have just recently been completed and included one site in Ontario. One man with cerebral palsy was so thrilled to be able to access a computer program independently that he broke down and cried.

The program has been designed for use with the IBM computer and can be acquired from:
Regenesis Development Corp.
1046 Deepcove Road
North Vancouver, B.C.
V7G 1S3
(604) 929-6663

Further information about the program can be obtained from:
Don Bentley
The Neil Squire Foundation
4381 Gallant Avenue
North Vancouver, B.C.
V7G 1L1

Look in the Book!

The Carolina Curriculum for Preschoolers with Special Needs,

by Nancy M. Johnson-Martin,
Susan M. Attermeier, and
Bonnie Hacker, published by
Paul H. Brookes Publishing
Company.

This book is actually an assessment and curriculum package rolled into one. The curriculum provides detailed teaching and assessment techniques in various areas of development including concepts, language, self help skills, fine motor skills, gross motor skills, and visual motor skills. The book is filled with practical and easy to administer evaluations and teaching ideas to address students who are displaying developmental delays. This book is a must for educators working with high risk preschool populations.

Computer Access Update!

Did you know you can now use the Touch Window with your Apple II series software?

The new Adaptive Firmware Card software recognizes the Touch Window as an alternative input method. Combined with the Adaptive Firmware Card and plugged into the monitor, the Touch Window can be used as direct access or as an alternative keyboard. Contact your computer dealer for further details!

Prediction Versus Understanding: Ways to Cope with Complexity

GEB VERBURG



"Research and Publications" is written by Geb Verburg, who has been involved in the field of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) since the mid-seventies. A cognitive scientist, Mr. Verburg is currently working as coordinator of the research in cognitive development program of the Rehabilitation Engineering Department at the Hugh MacMillan Rehabilitation Centre, Toronto.

This column is about the complexity of everyday augmentative communicative situations, about how difficult it is to investigate such real world situations, because the number of variables involved is so very large. This complexity is in part due to the fact that real life is a very complex process, and in part, to the requirement that research should be "objective, group-based, and quantitative" (National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation (NIDRR), 1989). The complexity of AAC situations is also due to the fact that we do not have a good and sufficiently simple model or theory of AAC that can help us understand alternative and augmentative communication as a special version of the general communication process.

I believe that there is a fourth

cause for the complexity we find around us, and that cause lies in our analytical thought habits, with which we insist on breaking our environment up into subjects and objects, agents and recipients, doers and onlookers, rather than looking at complex situations holistically as dynamic, living units.

First, let me picture the problem as I see it.

Seven Plus or Minus Two

An average person can comfortably remember seven plus or minus two numbers, or names, or other items of information (Miller, 1956). Any situation in which we are required to remember more than nine pieces of information calls for assistive devices such as paper and pencil, computers, or special mnemonic techniques e.g. lists, strings on fingers, or chunking small items together.

In our every day life and work there are many situations in which we have to keep track of more than nine pieces of information at approximately the same time. Let's take, for example, an average AAC situation with a twelve-year-old boy with a younger brother and sister, a father and mother, cousins, extended family, friends, a community school, consultants, teachers, assistants, people in the community, funding agencies, three or four pieces of technology, and the attitudes and expectations of everyone including of course the central character of this example. In a totally arbitrary, (unscientific) way I could suggest that in this "typical" example there are at least 50 variables in operation; the number may be ten or one hundred, the exact number is irrelevant but it is certainly larger than 7 plus or minus 2. There are very few persons who are able to keep these variables in mind and make logical and efficient decisions based on all the necessary variables.

We have, therefore, developed simple or sophisticated techniques to make sure we do not forget anything, snub somebody, or run out of crucial ingredients or sup-

plies. In clinical situations too, we have developed techniques of dealing with the complexity of a client's needs. We use manuals, or well established routines, standard observation protocols, a sequence of intervention procedures, or try-outs. We are guided at times by explicit knowledge or theory and sometimes we decide on the basis of intuition, experience or a hunch. In clinical practice this complexity poses a problem of understanding what is happening when and where. In research the simplifications that occur consist of ignoring or suppressing many of the known variables and denying the lesser-known ones.

Traditional Research

Traditional research operates in a predictive model, in which objective quantitative data are gathered on groups of subjects. In AAC and rehabilitation research in general, this research paradigm has always put tremendous strain on the experimental situation, on the subject selection criteria, on the subjects themselves and, more often than not, has resulted in partial, incomplete, and decontextualized answers (answers that did not fit into any clinical situation).

In the traditional research paradigm, the scientist reasons from some given initial knowledge and/or theory from which a hypothesis is derived that goes beyond that initial knowledge. This hypothesis is then submitted to a test. If the hypothesis cannot be rejected it is accepted for the time being and the new knowledge is added to the knowledge pool.

In the simplest version of this paradigm the researcher manipulates one or two variables and observes a third, which is affected by the first two according to some rule or relation specified in the hypothesis. When a traditional study encompasses more than ten variables, it becomes difficult to carry out controlled experiments and/or to interpret the results. In most experiments researchers have to select a small number of variables and ignore

other equally important variables. The result may be "findings perceived as contrary to experience" or experiments that "produce partial (and therefore) distorted pictures of reality" (NIDRR, 1989, p.3).

An article entitled: "Evolving Methodology in Disability Research" appeared recently in NIDRR's 1989 Newsletter. This article describes some challenges to the traditional research model, and lists social pressures towards change. It also presents some alternatives and principles of "postmodernism". The NIDRR Newsletter cites Willes Harman's characterization of modern science as objectivistic, positivistic, and reductionistic. These three assumptions still hold today to differing degrees in different sciences.

Instead of objectivism, Harman sees the emergence of participation as a research paradigm. "In participatory research one gains knowledge by identifying with it, instead of separating oneself from the observed. Rather than objective consciousness it involves compassionate consciousness" (NIDRR, 1989, p.2).

Those are interesting concepts to emerge in print. I remember the concept of participatory research from my student days, so very long ago. Time has not lessened the need for researchers who are deeply involved with their subjects. Research with people who have a disability demands such involvement. In a discussion I attended recently, a user described her powered wheelchair as her skin, her clothing. Another user compared her chair to prescription glasses which are ground to fit precisely to the eye of the wearer. The same applies to the users of communication devices. Each device is tailor-made for one specific user. That makes each potential research subject not just a unique person, but a unique AAC device user. And the only way to find commonalities in large numbers of vastly different unique individuals is by participating closely in as many individuals' activities as possible.

The reductionism that has characterized traditional science is, according to Harman, being replaced by "holism". The concept is great; the problem is and has always been one of implementing

it.

I believe that our problems with constructing a workable holistic model of persons communicating, or thinking or perceiving for that matter, is rendered extremely difficult because our method of thinking, our cognitive process itself, operates by splitting us as knowers from the things or objects that we know. But that is grist for a different paper.

Cracks at Holistic Perspectives

Given that I assume that thinking in a holistic mode is somehow "counter natural", it requires a conscious effort to grasp things conceptually or graphically in a way that keeps them together. Thus instead of thinking of the device user, the listener, the message and the device as separate and distinct elements or variables as Lloyd, Quist and Windsor (1990) call them, I am trying to think of these partners as points on a surface, or balls on a bumpy billiard table: points that have an ability to attract each other or repel; a surface that can foster the system to move in a particular direction or, conversely, a surface that throws up insurmountable barriers that make reaching a certain goal an unattainable task. I think of the communication situation as a potentially fluid state in which the child is influenced by adults around him/her, by past experiences, by current wishes, desires, and fears. That is not a simple linear situation. It is not one in which the child, the facilitator, or the consultant can make unilateral decisions validly. It would be so good to be able to picture this system as a surface with hills and valleys and the persons and devices as little rolling or stationary points of energy on that surface. Sometimes everyone can be caught in different valleys, and although we may all be moving in the same direction, the valleys can diverge and we all arrive at totally different endpoints, gradually moving farther and farther apart without any one of us really wanting to. Then there is the opposite situation, in which the client, consultant, and parents are all moving uphill in a very narrow path, now one person is leading then the other but all are getting up the same hill.

One can add attractors or

repellers to this bumpy surface. The child may for instance be attracted to X while the parent would much prefer Y and the consultant knows that Z is really the much better position to aim for. Wouldn't that make for a marvellous surface and for a great journey!

But while this effort at putting abstract things on (semi-abstract) surfaces may be interesting for those who enjoy geometry, the crux is, of course, to be able to understand what shape this growth field or chreod (as Waddington called it) is, what are the forces that push a person or groups in one direction rather than another, what are the winds that blow over the surface, can we understand them, can we model them? Can we make them work for or with the whole instead of against it? I believe so and will continue practising the art of perceiving wholes where my cognition only presents objects.□

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- NIDRR, (1989). Evolving methodology in disability research. *Rehab Brief; Bringing research in effective focus* 12, 5, p.1-4. National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202.

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High Technology as a Panacea for all Disabled Persons?

PATRICIA MCCARTHY



Patricia McCarthy is a speech pathologist in New Hampshire working with multiply-challenged children and adults. Her interest and experience for the past ten years have been in developing augmentative and alternative communication systems for individuals with moderate to severe cognitive impairments.

Like many parents and professionals, I, too, have at times found myself falling into an all or nothing approach when trying to discover the answer to an individual's communication needs. To many people in recent years, this answer has come to mean a microcomputer with voice output. "Don't you think it's time he/she 'moved up' to a computer?", is a phrase I have often heard in my work, as if somehow electronics equates with advancement. My experience and past successes and mistakes as a speech-language pathologist have told me that there are numerous factors to investigate before considering the appropriateness of any system. However, it has been recent course work in AAC, with accompanying texts, articles, research and lectures that has provided a solid rationale to back up my instincts.

Advances in technology have indeed improved the quality of life

for disabled persons. Today's micro-computer-based augmentative communication aid can perform a variety of functions; communicative, as an evaluation tool, in recreation, education, and in gaining more environmental control (Silverman, 1987). With improved voice quality using digitized speech, greater memory capacity, and keyboard adaption, this would seem like the perfect system for nonspeaking individuals. However, I will suggest some arguments as to why we must remain cautious in seeing these devices as miracle cure-alls for our students and children.

Normal Conversational Process vs Synthetic Speech

First, no augmentative system yet devised, no matter how expensive or technologically advanced, can come close to "approximating the normal conversational communication process" (Culp, 1987). Munson, Nordquist and Thuma-Rew (1987) talk about speech being the effortless exchange of information among individuals across a variety of contexts. There is nothing effortless about watching an AAC user, no matter how competent, as compared with the ease of natural speech with its quick pace, easy retrieval, clarity to the listeners, and "seemingly infinite combinations of words in unique patterns" (Culp, 1987). What we should hope for instead is "the most functional interactive communication possible given the constraints of augmentative techniques" (Culp, 1987). Munson et al. (1987) note that it is low-tech aids that provide faster speed of message transmission in conversation. He feels that the active involvement of the listener, custom design, and flexibility are very significant advantages.

Secondly, high technology does not automatically increase communicative interactions. "The tools are not the system, but the means by which the system is activated" (Munson, 1987). This phrase says so much about the direction of AAC today with its focus on pragmatics, and the role that technology must

play within this framework. I have seen too many parents purchase expensive personal computers and software for their communicatively-impaired child even when repeated assessments have determined that preference for, and ability with the system is not yet apparent. A parent has told me that she knows it is not functional, but "He looks so good, so normal when he is sitting at the computer." If we keep our focus on facilitating the user's success, factors such as user preference, creating functional opportunities to communicate, and sensitizing conversational partners to specific communicative behaviours, will not be superseded by how good or sophisticated a system looks (Calculator, 1988). As Dr. Calculator adds, "the size, complexity and cost of an aid, regardless of its impressive size, bear no consistent relation to the manner in which it will ultimately be used by the nonspeaker and listeners in various settings...."

No One Perfect System for All

Thirdly, rarely does one find any one system including electronic devices, that fits all users, works in all environments, is acceptable to all listeners, adjusts to all cognitive, sensory and motor abilities, and adapts to the user's needs over time. "Several modes of communication may be appropriate in order to have the most comprehensive system possible" (Munson, 1987). Part of intervention should be to allow and encourage the nonspeaker to become adept at using a wide range of communication strategies, including gestures, words or word approximations, and vocalizations already in his repertoire. High technology cannot and should not replace pre-existing communicative behaviours (Calculator, 1988). Neither should successfully used manual systems be discarded without first examining the student's needs in a variety of conversational settings. For example, one of my students uses facial expressions, vocalizations with varied inflections, some gesturing and eye blinks for yes and no with her family, points with her fist

when using mini-boards, and a flip picture system when seated in her wheelchair at school. She also accesses linedrawn pictures placed low on the wall when positioned on the floor, uses a preselected food card when ordering meals in restaurants, and is beginning to prefer a portable computerized system when in the community.

It would be wonderful if technology could automatically provide our students and children inclusion in conversational exchanges on ideas, feelings, humour, needs, etc. However, at least we seem to have greater awareness of the limitations as well as the benefits of high technology for augmentative communication. "More time and attention is being given to assessment to match the aid to the user's needs and abilities, to incorporation of electronic aids into a complete communication system for the user, and to development of interactive skills using augmentative communication" (Munson et al, 1987).□

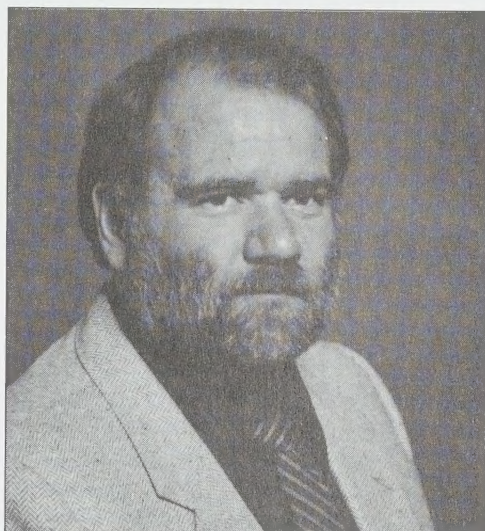
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AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION

Interpreting: The Development of the Profession

MIKE BOONE



Mike Boone is a free-lance sign interpreter in British Columbia, presently on contract with the British Columbia Institute of Technology in Burnaby, B.C. There he acts as a sign interpreter as needed by people who are deaf in many different situations at the college — from meetings to wood-working classes. He became interested in signing through an uncle who is deaf. This led to his enrolment in the Visual Language Interpreters' Program at Douglas College, New Westminster, B.C. He submitted the following article to Communicating Together describing the history of sign interpretation.

Sign language interpreting has been around for a long time, as long as there have been people using signs. But the road to professional interpreting appears to have begun around the 1920's, with its roots in the churches of America. At that time, the Episcopal (Anglican) church was the front-runner, looking to minister to the religious needs of deaf people. They accepted the idea of ordaining the deaf people to preach to deaf speaking people using their own language. The practice was seen as no different from having Spanish speaking people preach in Spanish. "Deaf

Heritage" states that by 1930, there were, throughout the U.S.A., twenty-two Episcopalian priests who were deaf. Some of these people held positions of high standing within the deaf community on a national level.

The Lutheran church also had a keen interest in ministering to the deaf, coming out with publications geared for that audience and providing religious teaching for children in schools for the deaf. Methodists and Latter Day Saints were also nurturing a strong interest of their own, while the Baptists concentrated on the west, even developing books to help religious interpreters for the deaf.

Undoubtedly, it was the late 50's, when television first started coming into its own, that some rumblings of change were first felt. The excitement of TV was lost on the deaf community as it turned out to be no more accessible to the hearing impaired than radio had been before it. NBC-TV caught wind of these feelings and in May, 1959, a weekly five minute newscast was first interpreted for the deaf. It was a short-lived experiment, but it was the "sign" of things to come.

Formation of the Registry of Interpreters

A workshop for people who worked with the deaf was held at Ball State Teachers' College in Muncie, Indiana, June 14-17, 1964, which was significant in that it officially recognized the increasingly important role interpreting was beginning to play in the lives of the deaf community. A national organization was established to address the development of the profession. A second workshop was held in Washington, D.C. on January 28-29, 1965, in which the new organization was christened The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). It was to fix procedures and offer upgrading opportunities which in turn generated a new respectability for sign language interpreters.

What had been, up until now,

largely a volunteer service, was starting to be seen in a new light, and it was the founding of the RID that led this movement towards recognition as a profession. This was all rather sudden, and some deaf people didn't like the idea of paying for what had always been regarded as a free service. Likewise, some long-time interpreters were uncomfortable with the idea of charging for their time and effort.

However, an organization was long overdue. The first decade of its existence marked a period of general structuring and development. Local chapters sprang up and a national certification program was established. In addition, special training programs for interpreters were developed.

This period also saw some major changes in (government) policy which affected the deaf community as never before. Deaf people were becoming more involved with the community at large as a result of technology (Telephone Devices for the Deaf and captioned television) which saw the demand for skilled interpreters increase. The paid freelance interpreter came to the fore, answering this call. Rights of the deaf, guaranteed by law, meant they could also expect these services to be made available to them at work and in school. In the 1970's, U.S. Public law 94-142 (mainstreaming) put it all into high gear.

Recognition of a Language

During the next ten years (1974-1984), the role and function of sign language interpreters was stretched and shaped into what we see today by both legal and social forces. The dominating factor was the new acceptance of the notion that ASL (American Sign Language) was conceded by linguists to be a real language on its own, independent of English. The implications for the interpreter are obvious — a major change from what they had been working with prior to this recognition. They were now expected to provide a service that focused on a truer rendition of the message being sent to the deaf consumer (manually coded English not being acceptable), something *spoken language* interpreters had been expected to deliver all along.

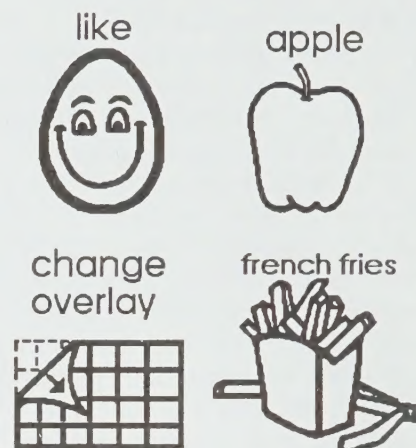
Surprisingly, the need for *spoken* language interpreters was not really

great until after World War I, during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 when people of various backgrounds, who spoke two languages fluently, were used. At first, translation was consecutive, then, at the Nuremberg trials of World War II, the simultaneous method was put to the test. Because of the significance of the proceedings, quality interpreting was essential. The eyes and ears of the world were focused on a highly emotional historic event and the need for expert, accurate, and faithful interpreting was undeniable.

Although the situations were different, the need and purpose of sign and spoken language interpreters run parallel. Both emerged quite recently and their ranks were largely filled with people who hadn't (in most cases) been formally trained as professionals, but who were multi-lingual from birth. Now the case is more and more of sign interpreters being specifically educated for that purpose and coming from a variety of backgrounds. Certainly an improvement from the days when a family member, friend or clergy would go along to "help out", and in so doing offer advice, opinions, and in general, become very personally involved.

Nowadays, it is hoped clients can know what to expect in terms of skill and attitude from sign as they do from spoken language interpreters. Most important is the code of ethics that separates the professional from the "Helper" role — confidentiality, impartiality, proficiency, discretion, etc. The key word is professional, whether it be sign language interpreter, doctor, lawyer, or educator. Professional means attitude. It means a set of standards. Something you can grab onto and something you can rely on. All interpreters strive for the same goal — to do their jobs well, take pride in what they do, and to come away with the respect of colleagues and the public alike. And to that end, all professionals walk the same ground. □

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

ESCI Special Interest Seminars

The Easter Seal Communication Institute (ESCI) holds a series of seminars throughout the year on a variety of topics related to the application of augmentative communication. These are held in the ESCI Resource Room, 250 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ontario.

Inquiries are invited, as well, from organizations wishing to host a seminar in their own facility.

The Spring/Summer Schedule for 1991 will be:

- Orientation to Boardmaking Technology. A two hour evening session. February 5 or April 9, 1991.
- Programming for Augmentative Communicators in the Preschool. Two part seminar, February 7th and May 16th, 1991.

- Using Interactive Games to Promote Early Communication. March 25, 1991.

Presenter: Maggie Axford Speech Language Pathologist, Frontenac Board of Education.

- Selecting Graphics for Communication Boards. April 11, 1991.

- Social Skills and Augmentative Communication Users at the Elementary and Secondary Level. April 22, 1991.

Presenter: Maggie Axford, Speech Language Pathologist, Frontenac Board of Education.

- Bliss in a Day. April 30, 1991.

Presenter: Shirley McNaughton

- Blissymbols: Facilitating Language Retrieval in Aphasia. May 1, 1991.

Presenter: Linda Sawyer Woods, Speech Language Pathologist, Ottawa Civic Hospital.

- A Day After Bliss. May 3, 1991.

(For those who have previously taken Bliss in a Day, Blissymbol Elementary Workshop, or completed the Independent Study Program)

Presenter: Shirley McNaughton.

- Blissymbol Elementary Workshop. May 29-31, 1991.

- For fees and further information contact:

Easter Seal Communication Institute
250 Ferrand Drive, Suite 200
Don Mills, Ontario M3C 3P2
Telephone: (416) 421-8377, ex. 2205

North Carolina Augmentative Communication Association

In Winston Salem,
North Carolina

- February 22, 23, 1991

Guest Speaker: Pamela Elder, "Engineering the Classroom and Activity Center for Interactive Symbolic Communication"

Contact: Jean Schwandes, 63 Botany Drive, Asheville, N.C., 28805, U.S.A.

Telephone: (704) 298-4918

The Ontario Association for Teachers of the Mentally Retarded

In Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario

- April 25-27, 1991

"Realism in the Nineties"

Contact: Dana Currie, Centennial Public School
141 Amos Avenue, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 2W8

Telephone: (519) 885-5660

Symposium for Teachers of Students with Physical Disabilities

In Toronto, Ontario

- April 26, 1991

Sunnyview Public School

Sponsored by CEC and ODPH

Fee: Members \$35.00

Non Members \$40.00

Contact: Ms Judy Bowles, Hugh MacMillan Rehabilitation Centre, 350 Rumsey Road, Toronto, Ontario, M4G 1R8

Telephone: (416) 425-6220

Fifth Canadian Congress of Rehabilitation

In Charlottetown,
Prince Edward Island

- May 26-29, 1991

"Science, Dignity, Opportunity"

Contact: Deborah Loosemore, Canadian Rehabilitation Council for the Disabled,

Suite 801, 45 Sheppard Ave. E., Toronto, Ontario M2N 5W9

Telephone: (416) 250-7490

RESNA

14th Annual Conference

In Kansas City, Missouri

- June 21-26, 1991

Contact: Susan Leone, RESNA, 1101 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20036 U.S.A.

Telephone: (202) 857-1199

About the Publisher

The Easter Seal Communication Institute (ESCI), formerly the Blissymbolics Communication Institute, has worked since its inception toward enhancing the lives of nonspeaking people. Now operating as a department of The Easter Seal Society, Ontario, ESCI focuses on supporting augmentative communicators and their families and the professionals who work with them through its strategic goals.

1) Using a collaborative consultative model, to develop and implement services to improve the quality of education for nonspeaking children and young adults.

2) To educate, inform and increase the awareness of the community about the needs and abilities of nonspeaking children and young adults.

3) To contribute to and participate in the growing field of augmentative and alternative communication.

4) While supporting a number of communication systems, to recognize the system of Blissymbolics as a valuable means to advance augmentative and alternative communication.

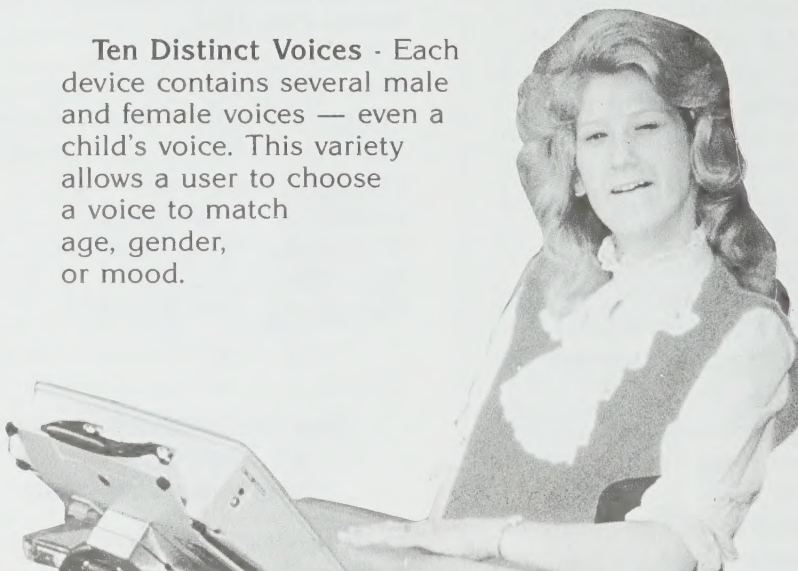
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